

Dec 2, 2014

Dear Tri Ong, Sam Woods, and Scott Kubly,

Thank you for providing us with the 2015 Arterial Asphalt and Concrete (AAC) repaving project 60% plan for Roosevelt Way NE. It's exciting to see the improvements currently planned for the corridor. We do have some comments and concerns regarding the plan.

There are a number of things **we like** about the current plan. It's wonderful to see the **expanded curb bulbs** along the corridor, as well as **widened sidewalks at bus stops**. The **removal of pedestrian push buttons** (often pejoratively referred to as 'beg buttons', as they force people to ask permission to cross the street) is a welcome change. We're happy to see a portion of a **protected bike lane** included, and the **removal of squeeze-points** near the University Bridge that currently force people riding bikes to merge into traffic.

However, the plan for the corridor still remains heavily focused on automobile travel, despite relatively low traffic volumes and close proximity to Interstate 5 and numerous parallel arterial streets. **We dislike** that the plan retains **two general purpose travel lanes** for cars. We're concerned that the **protected bike lane removes parking** in a business district, when it could instead remove a general purpose travel lane. We would like to see the **protected bike lanes extended** along the entire length of the project corridor. Some of the planned **curb bulbs and widened sidewalks are too wide to allow for future protected bike lanes**. We also think the intersection of **Roosevelt and NE 45th St needs additional study to make it more comfortable for people walking and biking**. Finally, there is a portion of the corridor near the bridge that **still forces bikes and cars to merge dangerously** which deserves to be looked at.

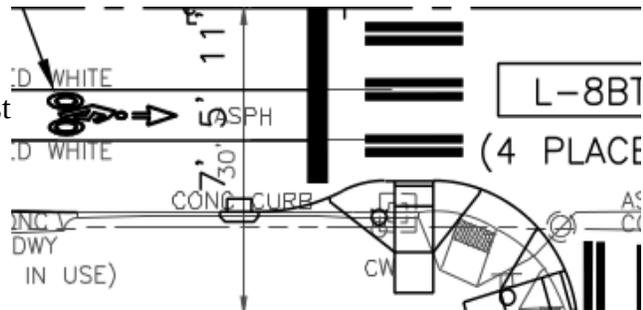
Our in-depth comments are broken out into sections below. Thank you for taking the time to consider our concerns!

Sincerely,
Andres Salomon
Seattle Neighborhood Greenways

The Good:

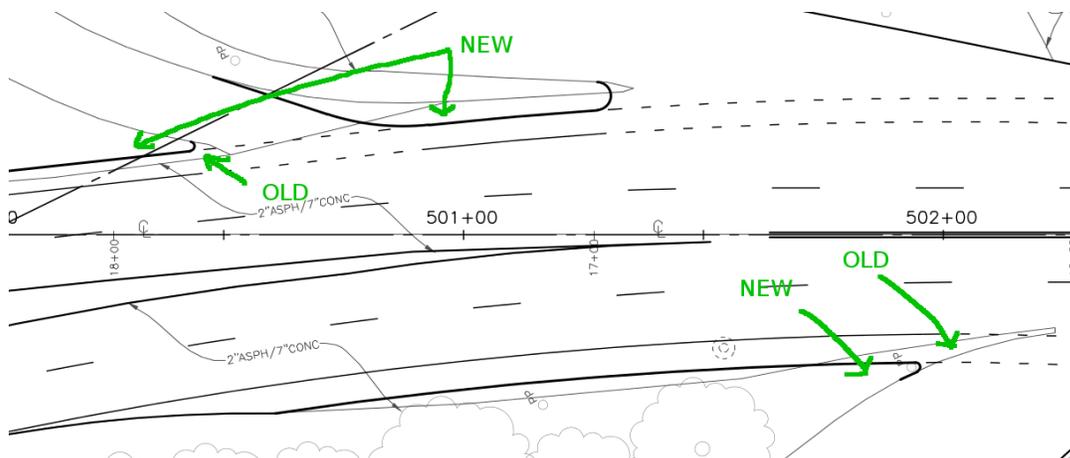
- 1) Curb bulbs are widened along the corridor. This makes crossing distances shorter for people walking, and slows down vehicles. Forcing cars to take a wider turn results in more time and distance for people driving to see people in a crosswalk. Curb bulbs that consume parking spots also increase sight lines at intersections, which would normally be blocked by parked cars.

Despite a 7 foot width for the parking lane on the west side of Roosevelt, most of the curb bulbs only extend 4 feet or so. We consider this a good thing, as it means that the remaining 2-3 feet can be utilized for bike lane protection in the future.



- 2) Pedestrian push buttons are currently located on Roosevelt Way NE at the intersections of NE 64th St, NE 47th St, NE 45th St, and NE 42nd St. All of these intersections have heavy pedestrian traffic volumes. Pedestrian push buttons don't make sense along the corridor, and we're glad to see them removed in the plans. In general, the presence of pedestrian push buttons at full traffic signals indicates a lack of regard for pedestrians, and encourages pedestrians to cross without the protection of a walk signal if they miss their chance to hit the button before the signal changes. We encourage Seattle to remove them whenever possible.
- 3) A protected bike lane between NE 45th St and NE 40th St will be a welcome safety improvement. We're excited to see that the lanes will be implemented as early as this month on a temporary basis, so that they can be monitored and modified prior to the repaving.

4)



The c-curbs near the bridge will be shaved slightly to allow people on bikes to pass through without being forced to merge with fast-moving cars while also avoiding cars merging from the ramp. This is a huge improvement.

The Bad:

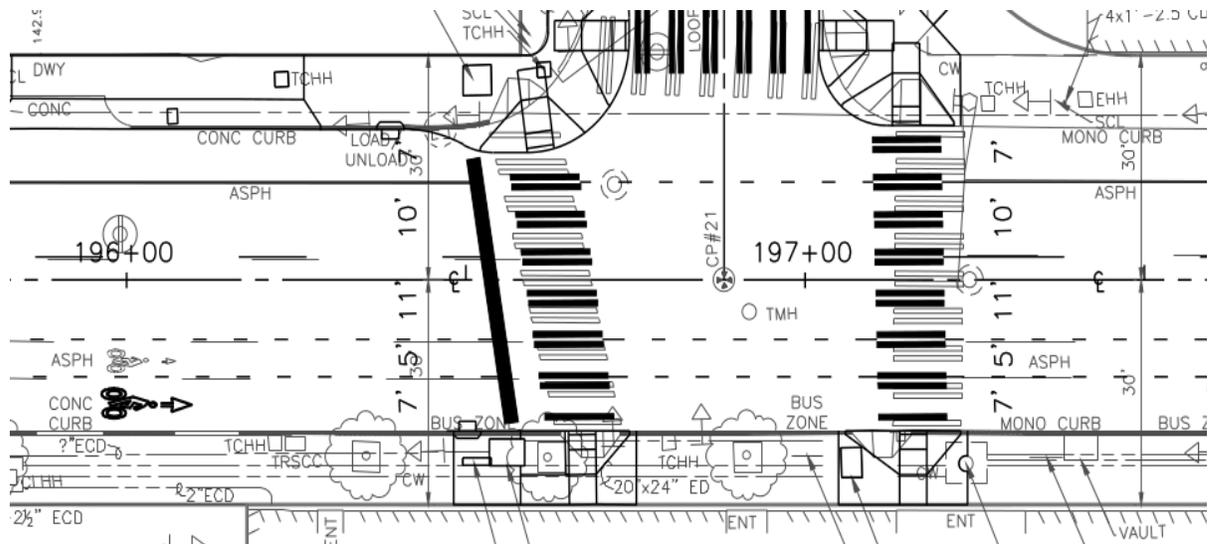
- 1) Roosevelt Way NE suffers from very irregular traffic patterns, and from a large mix of different vehicles. Massive pup-and-truck dump trucks hauling soil from light rail construction mix with bicycles, buses, and delivery trucks. For most of the day, the road is underutilized, with clusters of cars collecting at every light. For a few hours, it can be congested (often due to congestion on Eastlake, NE 45th, or elsewhere). Instead of keeping this road as two general purpose travel lanes with a 30 mph speed limit, we would like to see it turned into one general purpose travel lane with lights timed for 25 mph. If additional capacity is necessary, we would prefer to see it provided through a parking lane with peak-hour restrictions. One full-time lane plus an additional peak-hour travel lane could easily meet Roosevelt's current capacity, while also providing businesses with parking on the off-hours. This would benefit everyone using the corridor, as it sees numerous collisions of all user modes.



Roosevelt Way NE averaged 2 collisions per week in 2011, 2012

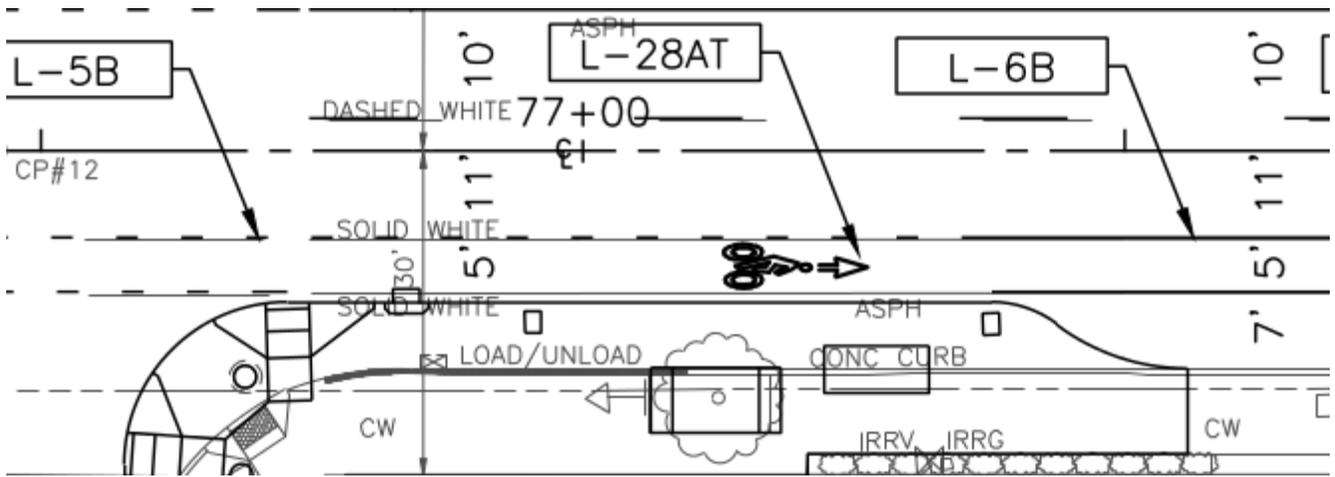
- 2) We are concerned that the removal of a parking lane instead of a general-purpose travel lane will result in a sub-standard protected bike lane, as well as 'bikelash' from nearby businesses. We believe that Roosevelt Way NE should be designed to prioritize the businesses, schools, and homes along the corridor, rather than automobiles attempting to speed through the

neighborhood. Many of the business owners we spoke to were concerned by both the number of collisions that occurred in front of their stores, and their need for parking. The current plan for parking removal on the west side of the street could actually result in additional speed by vehicles, as parked (and parking) cars tend to provide a calming effect.



Additionally, the area in front of UW Medical will lack proper protection for the bike lane, and there will be conflicts with bikes and buses/patient loading. If one of the general purpose travel lanes were to become a bus stop and loading zone, this would resolve the conflicts. These bus stops and loading zones would become in-lane stops in the case of a parking lane with peak-hour restrictions. To leave this segment unprotected would be a failure to build a truly All-Ages-and-Abilities protected bike lane.

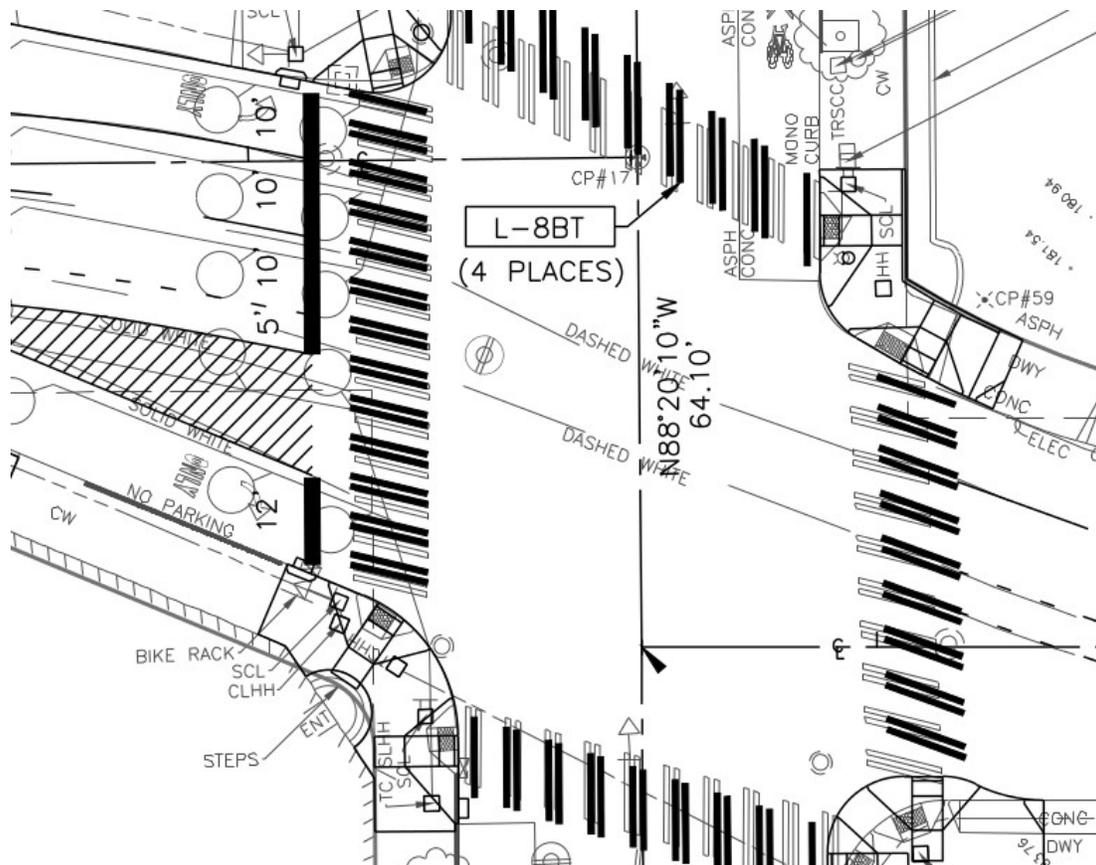
- 3) Roosevelt Way NE is an important corridor for people biking, connecting Maple Leaf, Roosevelt, University District, Eastlake, the University Bridge, two future light rail stations, and numerous businesses and employers. This is why the protected bike lane suggested for Roosevelt in Seattle's Bicycle Master Plan is considered a city-wide connector. Let's make it a priority to build these city-wide connectors now, rather than later. We would like to see the protected bike lane starting on the University Bridge and extending all the way to NE 65th St. Ideally this would be done as part of the 2015 AAC project, when it is most cost-effective to include the improvements. Delaying the implementation of a protected bike lane along the entire corridor means the potential for additional construction closures, cost, noise, and disruption to local businesses.
- 4) If we're not going to extend the protected bike lanes immediately, we need to ensure that the 2015 AAC project does not jeopardize future segments of a protected bike lane on Roosevelt. In places where curb bulbs and widened sidewalks are right next to the existing bike lane, we need to plan for the future.



One possibility would be to create bus and load-zone islands, similar to what was built on Dexter Ave. This should be made part of the AAC plans, with the bike lane being routed to the west of a load/unload zone or bus stop. One can imagine a five foot wide bike lane between the existing sidewalk and a seven foot wide island.

In places where the curb bulb is simply too wide, it should be narrowed.

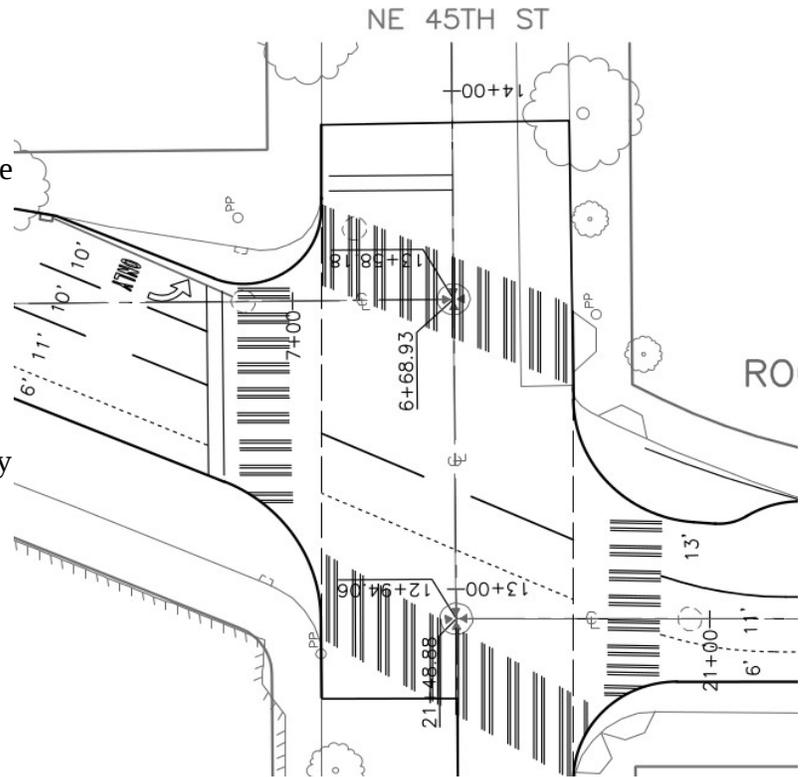
5)



Roosevelt & NE 45th - 60% plans

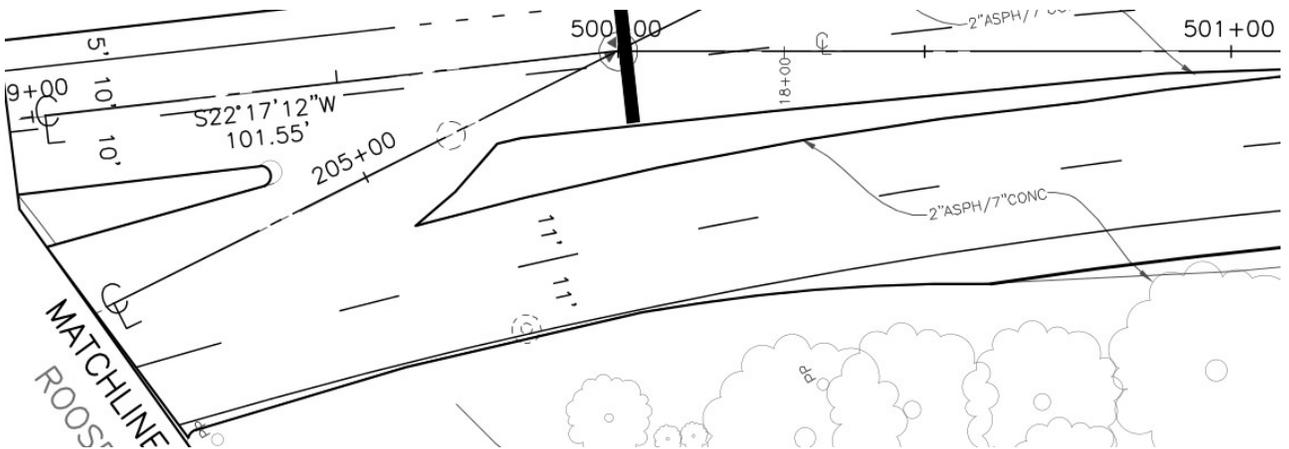
The earlier AAC 30% plans had reduced this intersection of Roosevelt Way NE and NE 45th St down to three lanes, removing the right turn lane on the north side of the intersection and adding a massive curb bulb in its place. We were disappointed to discover that the 60% plans have readded the lane. This intersection is awful to cross on foot, and the painted island does little to help. We recommend removing the right turn lane if possible.

We also would like to see a larger curb bulb on the south side of the intersection, next to the gas station. The gas station has numerous driveways which present a risk to people in the bike lane, vehicles making turns through the intersection, and people walking on the sidewalk and in the crosswalk. If driveway consolidation is possible, that would help greatly. This intersection already has a lot going on, and the driveways closest to it are not helping.



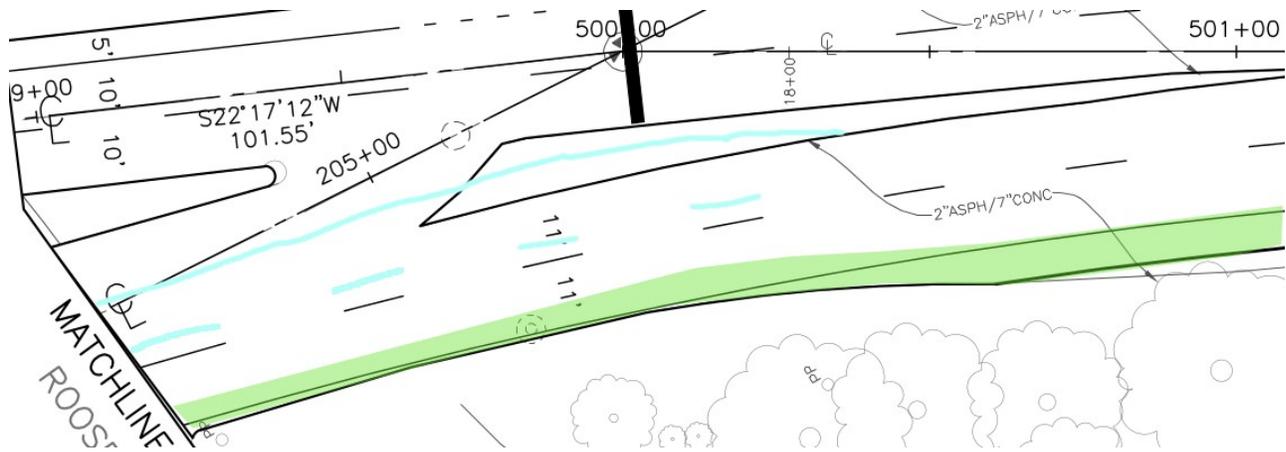
Roosevelt & NE 45th - 30% plans

- 6) At NE Campus Pkwy, the bike lane will disappear and bikes will be forced to merge with cars. They will share two 11 foot general-purpose lanes.



We think this needs to be examined more closely. At this segment of Roosevelt, there's a left-

turn lane that appears to be at least 13 feet wide. We think it's worth examining whether it's possible to narrow that lane (keeping in mind that buses turn there, but that they need a wide turn radius, not necessarily a wide lane), as well as narrowing the general purpose travel lanes. If we could free up 5 feet of space, that would allow for an unprotected bike lane.



Green = 5' unprotected bike lane; Blue = edges of general purpose lanes

After the left-turn pocket, the median island could be narrowed to provide additional space for the bike lane.